



# B H A S H A

By  
S H A H I D P R A V I N  
AUTHOR OF «MUST WE FIGHT?»

A Solution to our Language Problem  
in which you reader can actively  
participate right from now on.

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# FOREWORD

Writing this Book has been an act of faith. In spite of all opposition, discouragements and warnings I am persisting to make the idea contained in the Book popular with the people for the simple reason that I am still a firm believer in the unity of India and in the capacity for adaptation on the part of Indians. We have shown in all ages the faculty of our people to regard knowledge as the common heritage of all mankind and not that of one people or the other.

The Book is thought provoking, but the idea is essentially useful. My request to the reader is to put aside sentiment and assess the whole thing from the point of view of utility and reason.

If you are convinced, kindly do not leave the thing at that. There are one hundred and one ways of putting your conviction to practice. Why not begin writing Bhasha, I mean your own language in Bhasha-Lipi, type them out if you like, for you can do that on your present typewriter with ease, and teach your children the new way. I assure you they wouldn't be let alone after learning the first essentials, there

would be an endless stream of new Books literary and scientific all printed in Bhasha Lipi in their own language coming out to educate them more and more

The task is set Will you kindly take it up ?

**SHAHID PRAVIN**

# B H A S H A

## The Language Controversy.

The language controversy in recent times has become a major political issue with its various side shoots. Comparative philologists have turned overnight to be racial propagandists and from racial propagandists, I do not know what they would be next day. Race, religion, caste and community are all linked with this problem, with the result that if one sits down to examine the whole thing, one does not know where to begin and where to end.

I have not been dragged to this subject by way of any preference or aptitude, but out of a conscious realisation that the time is past for us to be just animals, 400 million of them. When every nation on earth much smaller than ours is forging its destiny with determination this huge land of ours is still a grazing ground for all sheep, its nationals a large body of slaves kicked from all corners. Should this continue? I think we had enough of these and it is time now to break the tradition that has gathered weight on one side and the oppression on the other.

## The Political Aspect of the Question

In any programme of political organisation for the country if the substance of democracy is to be assured the evolution of a common language is an absolute necessity it is alright to say that in a Federation or Union of Autonomous Republics (I borrow this from my Communist friends) the languages of the Federating units would do all the functions thereby leaving little or no necessity to evolve a common language This would not be a democracy however in which all the Federating units would freely take part but a superimposed Government in which there would be one boss and many cuckoos to coo his greatness If that is not the case the next possibility is for a loose disunion of all the Federating Republics pulling their weights in different directions

No democratic form of Government is possible without the elected representatives of the people freely conferring and discussing with each other in the councils of the Government and this in a country like India with scores of languages would be impossible in the absence of a common medium of expression To drive home the fact let us visualise an Assembly of elected representatives from all parts of India call it Supreme Soviet or what you will where every

one speaks his own language and nothing else The representative from the Punjab would speak in Punjabi which would be interpreted by a set of twenty different interpreters in twenty different languages, all at one time if the members are provided with earphone arrangements or one by one to make the other members understand The result would be simply un-enlivening, a dull monotony in which none is interested An Assembly called to discuss and arrive at a decision over a vital problem would turn out to be nothing but a puppet show or mimicry It would be alright if the business to be transacted is one of hearing the party leaders eulogising their own work and for the rest of the Assembly to stand up and say "Glory to our Motherland under Mr So and So's leadership, which has enabled us to progress so greatly, I was a peasant in Thana earning Rupees five per year before this regime, but to-day I am an Architectural Draftsman in Asansol earning Rs 150/- per month and I have a gramophone, a radio, five children, All this made possible by the leadership of Mr So and So Victory to our Motherland ! Victory to Mr So and So !" I do not think that is the democracy we are planning, and if we want anything better than that surely we must have a national language commonly understood by all



## The Future of Provincial Languages

Our effort to evolve a common language in India should not be taken to mean that the various other Provincial Languages lack expressive capacity or they are in any way inferior to the language we are trying to adopt as our national language. To us a common language is as much a necessity as the growth of a powerful state to assure the comfort of its nationals in as democratic a form as possible and beyond that there is no other significance. On the contrary I should think some of our Provincial Languages are much more beautiful than Hindi or Urdu, say for example Bengali, Gujarati or Tamil. The claim for Hindi or its variation to be the national language is only by reason of its simplicity and to this should be added the fact that it is easily understood and spoken either in its pure form or in some other allied form by three fourths of the total population of the country already. If our language is to be determined by sentiment or nationalism pure and simple then Hindi is a foreign language fifty per cent of its vocabulary being inspired by foreign languages particularly Persian but in recent times this sentimental objection has been surmounted by [calling it Aryan, Indo Aryan, Indo European and

the rest of like terms by comparative philologists who have taken on themselves the onus of racial propaganda

The core of all the North Indian Languages and the entire body and soul of the South Indian Languages are purely Indian and for that reason are worth cultivating and preserving Our orientation as far as possible should be towards India and India alone, but of late increasing numbers of our North Indian Literateurs particularly, show a tendency to go outside the boundaries of our languages and literature for inspiration. For instance in poetry I am frankly of opinion that as far as the Indian masses are concerned Indian meters and rhymes are definitely more soul stirring than Persian But in how many languages of India we find free renderings of those beautiful Indian meters Keka, Kakali, Manjari and Malika But before we can aspire to further enliven our provincial languages we have first of all to take them to the masses and carry their literature into the villages

### **The Example of Sanskrit**

The idea of the evolution of a common language is not new to this country In fact Sanskrit is the result of such an effort I know by making this remark I am cutting at the root of two important theories in

this respect one of the learned linguists  
 mostly European and the rest European inspired  
 that Sanskrit is a language imported and  
 originated by the so called Aryans when they  
 came to India and the other of the learned Hindu  
 Pandits that Sanskrit or Devanagari is the divine  
 inspired language from the Himalayas or beyond  
 Of these two sets of people one must admit that the  
 latter class are more well versed in Sanskrit than the  
 former The knowledge of the European and the  
 European inspired philologists of our time of Sanskrit  
 or for that matter of any two sets of Indian languages  
 is a questionable quantity From the theory they have  
 propounded I should think this is much less than that  
 of a school boy with the difference that the school  
 boy is a mere school boy while these learned worthies  
 either have a Sir title a Doctorate Degree of one or  
 more of Universities a flowing beard in some cases  
 and invariably the capacity to hoodwink public mind  
 by coining intricate terminology and remarkable  
 patience to compile bibliographies and dig their  
 courtyards to find out stupas coins old manuscripts  
 and other valuable archeological finds decipherable  
 by themselves alone correctly The Sanskrit Pandits  
 however have no such preterce but the defect is that  
 they lack commonsense

## Religious Unity—Basis for Sanskrit.

The growing religious unity of the country from Kanya Kumari to the Himalayas, prior to the wholesale immigration of Asiatic hordes, led to the evolution of a common language out of the various Prakritic Provincial languages by the determined efforts of the scholars and religious leaders. The word "Samskrita" itself proves this and Panini, the Grammarian in a later era also attests to the fact that the language is refined out of the Prakritic spoken languages. From this it is a matter of commonsense to adduce that there were various colloquial Prakrits prior to Sanskrit having limited number of words and sounds when compared to Sanskrit. Of these Prakritha Bhashas only Tamil seems to have survived without losing all its identity while in the case of most of the North Indian languages these have been subjected to various mutilations, mixtures and reformations in subsequent eras particularly after the immigration of Asian and Central Asian people, call them Aryans (in Persian and not in Sanskrit) or what you will, with the result these languages have lost almost all of their Prakritic content.

In the making of Sanskrit the prime forces at play were the advance of knowledge, religious, philosophical,

medical and astronomical and the need for more exact terminology than what the Prakritha Bhashas could supply or putting into concrete shape such knowledge. It should be understood that the Prakritic languages had limited vocabularies and had limited number of alphabets or sounds. The scholars who evolved Sanskrit thought in purely arithmetical terms they refined or more correctly subdivided every Prakritic sound or alphabet into three four and five for example guttural palatal cerebral dental and labial which produced an alphabet extending to 51 letters and by combination some hundred compound letters or sounds which through a further process of arithmetical permutation and combination helped to produce the vocabulary. Religious mysticism had also a lot to do in the ascribing of meanings to these sounds in addition to the original meanings to similar sounds in Prakrithi. The Prakritic sounds and vocabularies were evolved out of spontaneous effort to articulate emotion and to give expression to ideas at first very crudely and then gradually these were codified to form what could be called language in the present sense of the word. The word Prakrit or Prakrithi i.e. pertaining to nature is however a Sanskrit word used to denote these various dialects while these dialects themselves were then only known as pertaining

to the areas or tracts in which these were spoken. There is a widespread belief supported by eminent philologists that Pali is perhaps the only Prakrit surviving. Pali no doubt has many Prakrit sounds in it, but all that constitute to-day's Pali are not Prakrit, for to-day's Pali is a product of the Buddhist Era when out of religious rivalry Pali was resuscitated to compete with Sanskrit and as an exclusive vehicle for the propagation of Buddhist literature. The original Magadhi or Pali was very much imperfect to meet this need, had a small vocabulary and very little capacity to be expressive, but the religious rivalry set the zeal for expanding Pali by a regular process of Palising Sanskrit by making Sanskrit sounds resemble Prakrit by obliterating the harsh consonants from such words. This artifice has been the cause of confusion for many philologists who believe that this Pali is older than Sanskrit, which is however not a fact. The present Pali is something like our present day Provincial languages, a core inspired by Prakrits but essentially made to assume concrete shape with the assistance of Sanskrit. In the same way to take an example Bengali has many such Prakrit sounds in it but much less in Hindi which has more of foreign words than Prakrits, say fifty per cent Persian and the rest in pure Sanskrit forms with modifications to facilitate pronunciation. Telugu

Malayalam Kanarese Mahratti and Gujrati all have Prakrit sounds to a greater or lesser extent but these languages have their present form with the help and inspiration of Sanskrit. They have been evolved to take the present shape in very recent times when compared to Sanskrit or the pure Prakritis.

### **The Conception of Present Day Philologists**

To philologists I mean the European Philologists with sinister intentions of dividing the country into racial factions and their slavish followers the so called Aryan Indian philologists trained at Government expense the gulf between Prakritis and Sanskrit is unexplainable and confusing and this has led them to believe that Sanskrit originated somewhere in Central Asia as near to Europe as possible. Their idea of Prakrit is confined to the Prakritis spoken in the Gangetic valley or an under current of Prakrit running through every present day spoken language in these areas. This vision has made them believe that Sanskrit is germane only to the Gangetic valley and foreign to the vast regions of the South and entirely unconnected with the languages spoken there. This is as erroneous as the racial theory which has been spread in relation thereto in the country deliberately and with sneakish arrogance by a section of the people. Sanskrit bears the same relation to

Tamil, Kanarese, Telugu or Malayalam as it bears to Hindi, Mahratti, Gujarati or Bengali, if not more, and the Prakrits spoken in these various regions helped its evolution in time immemorial. For this reason Sanskrit has been the most unifying factor in the history of India, and the various people in the North and the South, the East and the West even to this date find it as natural and germane to them as their own spoken languages.

### **Is Sanskrit a Dead Language ?**

It is a market place talk among philologists and scholars that Sanskrit is a dead language, its days are gone and Sanskrit as a language has failed. This talk is as ill-conceived and ill-founded by facts as any other gossip of its kind, for example that of the charwoman in the market place about the woman who ate up the village and the man who drank all the water in the river.

Sanskrit was never conceived or evolved as a spoken language for the masses, but was evolved as a medium for inter-provincial intercourse on scholastic matters, for expression of literary, scientific and philosophic ideas and generally as a language for treasuring the wealth of knowledge on which the people in different parts of the country could draw upon as common heritage. The inadequacy of the various Prakrits (colloquial



languages) existent to meet this need led to this distilling and the evolution of a more comprehensive and definitely more involved language abounding in technical words with the maximum of expressiveness Sanskrit was never a spoken language (In the sense of a language which is used at home and in the market place) and for that reason it is as much living to day as in the hoary past Its purpose is as green to-day as it was then It was exclusively used in literature whether religious philosophic or scientific and the Provincial languages as now understood came to be used in writing only recently under the impact of foreign culture and languages Even then for their alphabets and for expressing ideas beyond the very commonplace they had to draw upon Sanskrit and dilute it with the colloquials and the foreign hybrid forms It was in the eras which followed when the origin of Sanskrit was lost in antiquity that fiction writers and romanticists began to call it Devanagari or language of the Gods and most of them thought that it originated somewhere beyond their conception which probably could be the top of the Himalayas where nobody lived except the Devas and the Saints of their fond imagination And this literature has formed the basic clue and authority for the present day philologists

to trace the origin of Sanskrit beyond the borders of India. Might be one day the same people would say that Tamil originated in Australia or Italy, Bengali in Hongkong and Malayalam in Egypt in their wildest stretch of imagination, for to them India is poverty stricken in thought as well as in material needs of life. This statement of mine is not unsupported by facts for there are already theorists who claim that South Indians (in their term Dravidians as distinct from Aryans) formed a branch of the racial family which inhabited the tracts of land from Australia to Malaya and French Indo-China and that Bengalees are a mixture of the Mongol-Dravidian stocks and that Malayalees have characteristics peculiar to Egyptians. There are others also who claim that all these people came from the Alpine regions and travelled the other way round. I do not think there would be a dearth of old coins, inscriptions and stone images to support such theories if one wanted to adduce such evidence, and who knows in some future eras the parts of an American aeroplane crashed on the way from Cairo to Chungking at Bhagalpur and dug out there with the skulls of dead Americans would be enough evidence to prove that American kings ruled India and that Americans were near blood brothers to Indians.

Since Sanskrit was not evolved by the lay masses but by a coterie of learned folk from their midst with the purpose of literature in the forefront rather than the needs of the common people it did not spread to the masses as their medium of expression. Its peculiar construction and the feature of one word being capable of expressing different meanings and a rigid phonetic injunction regarding the pronunciation of the words kept the language far away from the common people and from being utilised for their every day needs. Added to this fact was the peculiar social structure (I should think this came in later) which made learning a privilege of the few instead of a common right. And to day with education becoming a common right of the masses our national language if one is to be adopted or evolved should reach the masses and for that sake must be direct simple and elastic.

### **Evolving a New Language**

The evolution of a new language is not so easy to day as it was in the past when men had rudimentary forms of expression alone. Various attempts have been made to evolve some such language for international use with little success and if we attempt one to meet our needs here I should think

there would be lesser chances of success Theorising would not help solve our needs and we have got to descend to the realms of practicality

### The Choice With Us

In present day India since the largest mass of its people live in the Northern parts in the Gangetic Valley and the plains surrounding it the language spoken in these regions has a greater chance of becoming the National Language than one of the languages spoken in the East, South or West. To the languages of the North, this Hindi, Hindustani or Urdu has become the basic core which in itself is a mixture of foreign languages particularly Persian with the early forms of Prakrits spoken in these areas These languages have very recent origins, and evolved by the common people in the fields and the market places these have spread far and wide into the interior as a medium of common expression Such a language however has characteristic virility because of its hybrid stock with equally great limitations when applied to the realm of literature As a medium of common expression it is easy and flexible but when used for literary purposes one gets stuck up very soon and has to find a way out by resorting to an

act of incessant borrowing from other languages which are more rich and comprehensive

### The Hindi Urdu Controversy

When once it has been realised that this hybrid language should take the place of a national language for the entire people naturally the controversy has grown whether this language should lean to the father or the mother for its future support and nourishment. The controversy between Hindi and Urdu is essentially that when analysed to the root. The affinity to the father is guided by religious feeling and some sort of racial arrogance characteristic of hybrids while the affinity to the mother is guided by a sense of self respect and the spirit of self reliance. This controversy when translated to the realm of politics assumes the question whether our orientation should be towards India or Persia and in the religious field as to whether Hinduism or Islam should be the dominating factor.

From a dispassionate study of the whole controversy and through years of fruitful thinking I have come to the conclusion that it is premature and foolish to break our heads on the Hindi Urdu controversy now. If we the physical and social contact and the intermixture of foreign races with

the Indian that brought about the evolution in recent times of the various hybrid languages of the north. If we can duplicate the circumstances to-day and bring about a more solid and lasting intermixture and contact of the various provincials of this country we will have set the pace for the evolution of a common language for the whole of India from North to South and from East to West. In such circumstances it would be the people themselves and their literateurs who would be evolving the language and not the politicians. Languages evolved out of political or religious zeal would not survive for a long time, for these must meet their doom with changes in politics or in religion. Languages must be evolved out of more solid material, out of life and living and through the inner urge of the people. To us the immediate task is therefore to make possible such contacts on a wide scale and in the perfect of harmony with no squeamish sentiments of religion, race or caste marring the blending.

### **Scripts as Barrier to Unity.**

The greatest barrier standing in the way of a correct appreciation of the various provincial languages of India has been the difference in the Scripts of these languages. A man who attempts to

study more than one language will be in a position to understand the difficulty and gauge the strain this difference in the Scripts imposes on him. In India inspite of the fact that all the various alphabets follow the same alphabet as Sanskrit in their phonetic values the scripts are different and for this reason these various languages instead of fostering the unity which Sanskrit tried to create have pulled themselves apart from one another. Except for a few languages like Hindi and Mahrathi all the others have scripts different from that of Sanskrit and I should think this was not through any separatist tendency prevalent at the time when these various scripts were decided upon. It must have been purely self conceit on the part of the scholars to be original which made them ascribe different shapes to these characters. On the contrary if these various languages were to adopt the same script as Sanskrit the evolution of a common language for India would not have been so difficult as at present.

The realisation of the above fact has made many people including Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to suggest that Devanagari or some adaptation of Devanagari be made the common script for all the Provincial languages. Their intentions

are perfectly good but these people fail to realise the present needs of India and the limitations of the Nagari Script in the present era. When the Nagari Script was evolved conditions were different from what obtain to-day. It was in the height of spiritual and cultural development that Nagari Script was evolved when the rest of the world looked to India for inspiration. But to-day the scale is turned differently. We are placed in a position whereby we have to borrow constantly from the material civilization of the West and keep pace with the progress in the West as a measure of self preservation. In the era of spiritual civilisation, Europeans, not only did they catch up with us but through a blending of their own original ideas with that of ours, outstripped us in progress and came even to subordinate our civilisation to theirs and relegate us to the background. Sanskrit Alphabet was evolved when men had unlimited amount of leisure, learning was the monopoly of a privileged few and elaboration instead of simplification was the tendency. They could have very well then thought of an alphabet of 121 letters instead of 51 for it mattered little to the common folk, for learning was not after all regarded as indispensable for living. In the place of the printing press and paper, pointed iron



rods and palm leaves served as medium for the spreading of knowledge

Our present day needs are to catch up with the Europeans in their progress and outstrip them if possible with the utmost speed and for this it is essential that education should be as universal and up to date as theirs and even better. This cannot be accomplished without making full use of mechanical contrivances printing presses of the most advanced types typewriters Linotype machines etc and for such use the Nagari Script is not so well suited as the Roman Script. To us the adoption of the latter Script in common for all languages is as much a necessity as political or economic progress for without widespread scientific and technical education both are impossible of attainment.

### **Objections To The Roman Script.**

The objection to the adoption of the Roman Script as a common script for all the Indian languages is a matter of sentiment with many people. For example Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru confesses in the following terms. The Latin script has been advocated as a solution for some of our linguistic difficulties. It is certainly more efficient than either Hindi or Urdu from the point of view of rapid work. In

these days of the typewriter and duplicator and other mechanical devices, the Latin Script has great advantages over the Indian scripts which cannot utilise fully these devices. But in spite of these advantages I do not think there is the slightest chance of the Latin Script replacing Devanagari or Urdu. There is the wall of sentiment ofcourse strengthened even more by the fact that the Latin Script is associated with our alien rulers. But there are more solid grounds also for its rejection. The scripts are essential parts of our literatures, without them we would be largely cut off from our old inheritance" (Quoted from National Language for India, a symposium edited by Dr Z A Ahmed, Kitabistan, Allahabad)

### **Sentiment or Reason-Which Should Prevail ?**

What we should think is, whether we should sacrifice our progress and national unity for mere sentiment. What use is this sentiment to us and what benefit does it confer on us except that of tying us to the dead past and restricting our progress ? Is the Latin Script a heritage of Englishmen alone ? What of the Germans, Italians and other Continental people and what of Americans ? Did sentiment prevent these people from adopting this script as

their own ? Does Panditji advocate on the same lines of sentiment that we should not study and practice Western Medicine or should not generally adopt the principles of Double Entry Book keeping ? Will Walchand Hirachand or Birla be able to keep track of the vast ramifications in industry by the indigenous system of Book keeping to day ? If sentiment is to be our guiding factor we will have to sacrifice much of our present day knowledge and progress and retire into our old shells and be there never to come out. Instead the real test of genuine nationalism is the capacity to regard knowledge wherever originated as the common heritage of man kind and utilise such knowledge for the progress of the Nation. Let me ask this. Did this sentiment stand in the way of large body of Indians adopting the Arabic or Persian Script for Urdu ? Were not these Persians their one time rulers and yet Indians without the least hesitation adopted their script and borrowed from their language. Even Mahatma Gandhi to-day speaks of Devanagari and the Arabic Script going hand in hand in the future plan of things and if the Muslim League grows still more powerful will not the large body of Hindus be forced to abandon the Devanagari and adopt the Arabic script for their languages !

From the phonetic stand point the Arabic and the Latin alphabets follow almost the same principle but the advantage with the Latin Script is that it is more adaptable to printing and typewriting .The Arabic Script in addition has a serious disadvantage, that of writing from right to left in the reverse order, and the characters are definitely ugly when compared to any other script Moreover<sup>1</sup> neither Arabic nor Persian can lay claim to literatures which can cope up with the present day scientific knowledge nor that much of elasticity to evolve terminology suited to modern science Another factor is that even nations wedded to these cultures are discarding such for more rational and scientific systems, like the modern Turks who believe that the restraint placed by outmoded Arab customs, ways of living and thinking are fit to be thrown overboard to ensure progress -

The greatness of India lies in the fact that Indians at all times in history have shown the greatest willingness to absorb knowledge and culture irrespective of their origin and association Such a parallel is only found in the case of early Arab thinkers in the period when Islam was yet to be reduced to the level of a fanatical or dogmatic

creed By an analysis of all early world civilizations it would be found that the period of renaissance in every country was brought about by such intellectual awareness and adaptability on the part of its citizens

The survival and the adoption of the Arabic Script on a considerable scale can be ruled out as the least probable and I am definitely certain that once the tide of communal nationalism has been allowed to run its course Pakistanies would themselves agitate and throw away the dead weight of outmoded Arab customs and script with a view to progress And if nothing short of Pakistan would satisfy the Muslims there is no reason why the rest of India should add this imposition of an Arab script for their languages And as regards this Pakistan if we continue to live and think as at present there would be no amity in the country and both the Hindus and the Muslims would be driven to seek a solution by resorting to some sort of partition of the country

When the Arabic script was evolved men did not think in terms of writing as we do at present with the hand on paper or palm leaves The characters were chiselled on stones or other hard surfaces holding the chisel in the left hand making use of

the right hand for penning the chitral. This mode of carving out the letter influenced the shape of the characters and also the way of writing from right to left. Moreover the alphabet is imperfect in its adaptation to the Indian languages which abound in long vowel sounds. It is claimed that Urdu or the Arabic Script can be written faster than the Nagari Script, but in reading like Shorthand it is much slower and illeisible.

The other objection raised by Pandit Jawaharlal is in connection with our losing the link with the past. From the limited number of Books published in our Indian languages it can be safely predicted that it would take only one years effort on the part of an organised State to duplicate all these literatures in the new script. Such transliteration of all Vedic and ancient Sanskrit literature would enable the masses to gain first hand knowledge of these literature instead of as hearsay evidence. Moreover when once these literatures have been brought to the light of the masses, this would encourage research and inquiry into the origin and growth of the languages on a scale unprecedented and entirely different from what has been accomplished in our present-day Universities. Current researches have been carried

on with a view to lend colour and support to a particular racial theory propounding that the origin of all culture is Aryan and thereby European

### **The Roman Script as a Solution to the Controversy**

From the Communal point of view the adoption of either Arabic or Devanagari script would be resented by large sections of the people and in the case of the Roman Script since its adoption does not amount to the aggrandisement of one community over the other there is lesser chances of friction. In addition much headway has already been made by one hundred and fifty years of concerted effort on a scale not attempted in the history of India for the spreading of English education and with it the English Alphabet. Its influence can be gauged from the fact that literate persons generally have come to use the script for their signatures, for titles of language Pictures for signboards and in an endless variety of ways its use has spread in the country. Those who know the Roman alphabet are more numerous than those who know the Devanagari or the Urdu alphabets. If the claim of Hindi or Urdu is based on the fact that these languages are spoken by the largest number of people in the country then why not applying the same principle

the alphabet which is the widest in use be adopted for general use. Moreover this alphabet is of universal application and with this one reform alone we will be adding atleast fifty years of progress to our present day level of education.

Another point which should deserve attention is the future system of education. Presuming that no common script is adopted for sentimental or other reasons for the various Provincial Languages a child in Bengal, Tamilnad, Gujerat or Punjab under a national Government will have to study three different scripts i.e., one of his own mother tongue, one of Hindi or Urdu whichever is the national language and one of a modern European language whether English, German or anything else. One set of people would argue that we can dispense with this modern European language, but these people are not talking in the light of present day needs of India. Without being generally conscious of the progress in the west, it would be impossible for us to contribute effectively to our own knowledge and progress. Moreover we would be senselessly throwing aside the opportunity to gain out of the accumulated experience of centuries of mechanical and technical progress by one foolish act of ours. This can only amount to shutting one's eyes like an ostrich to escape detection by enemy



and the result would be as disastrous as that of the foolish ostrich. Say we dispense with this modern European language to suit the whims of these tortoises even then the child will have to learn two different scripts with the result he wouldn't be gaining proficiency in either in the Primary stage. Gandhiji's objection to the adoption of the Roman script is based on the reasoning that its phonetic method imposes a very great strain on millions. What of this strain of learning two or three different scripts is it easier than learning the phonetic method involved in the study of the Roman script and its use? Is not the strain similar to that of learning Urdu which has an alphabet very similar to that of the Roman and which follows an almost similar method of phonetic combination with an added disadvantage of writing from the right to the left? Gandhiji acquiesces in the existence of Nagari and Arabic scripts side by side without a thought of its practicability. Can a sane individual with the slightest bit of reasoning capacity compare the strain and wastage of effort under a system which Gandhiji visualises with the effort involved in studying the Latin script. I should think it is the script of Hindi that has stood in the way of many people (perhaps Raja Gopalchari also belongs to this group) mastering

the language and if that be the case with adults and with men of Rajagopalchari's intelligence, what of the child in the primary school stage ? Will he be able to master two and more of scripts and be educated in the meanwhile ? Tradition is not everything to us, but progress definitely means everything to us now

### **Eliminating The Phonetic Difficulty.**

The idea that the English phonetic method imposes an additional strain in learning arises out of the fact that people think that when the script is changed we would be adopting the same method of indiscriminate spelling, accents and pronunciation of the English language This proves that these gentlemen have not paid one moments thought to the whole question We have legitimate cause to admire those who originated the Sanskrit alphabet and its phonetics It would be folly on our part to throw this aside The future generation would be taught the alphabets of their own languages in the same way as they are taught at present with the difference that the characters would be in another shape

In the propagation of any idea it is the wall of sentiment gathered through the ages that stands

in the way We have got to surmount this in some way or other and a start must be made sooner or later With this end in view efforts have been made for organising an All India body called the Bhasha Samithi to propagate the idea The constitution envisages the organisation of Provincial Samithies for the various languages of India to publish Books periodicals and literature printed in the Latin Script and to educate children and adults in the use of the script To counteract the sentimental reaction and to perpetuate the name of the organisation it has been found fit to name the script as Bhasha Lipi common to all the languages of India I do not think this is in any way a new departure since the same script when used for English is called the English alphabet and when used for German the German alphabet in the same way when we adopt it it is Bhasha Lipi for us and not the English script

### The Alphabets in Bhasha Lipi

A chart showing the adaptation of the Bhasha Lipi to the alphabets of the various Indian languages is appended to this volume In the selection of the diacritical marks the author has kept in view the present arrangements on Typewriters and other

mechanical devices so that the least difficulty would be experienced in its general adoption for printing and typewriting. The arrangement is perfectly simple, without sacrificing at the same time Bhasha Sudhā or purity of sound in the various languages including Sanskrit. It also takes into account the current system of phonetics as adapted to English so that there would not be much difficulty for one who knows English to get himself acquainted with the sounds of the Indian alphabets.

On referring to the chart it would be found that by making use of 23 characters of the Bhasha Lipi the alphabet of any Indian language can be compiled with perfect ease and only three diacritical marks need be used in the process. In some languages even these 23 letters are not necessary, for example Sanskrit can be transliterated in Bhasha Lipi by making use of only 21 of these characters. The letters Q, X & W of the English alphabet are only necessary for transliteration of foreign words including Arabic and Persian.

It is recommended in the teaching of children the 23 or 21 Dhathu Cabdas or root sounds be taught first pronounced as indicated in the last column of the chart in Devanagari equivalents. The children can

then be taught to combine these Dhathu Cabdas to form the regular alphabet of the particular language concerned in the same order as at present and following the same pronunciation as currently prevailing. When once this has been mastered children can be taught to make combination of vowel sounds with consonants and the formation of compound letters. This should not present any great difficulty and in fact it would be much simpler than memorising the hundreds of compound forms which are made use of at present in the various languages. For example to write Kra the child will write the sound quite naturally enough by combining the three Dhathu Cabdas K R and A or the three alphabets of his Akshara Mala Ka Ra and A with the vowels omitted from the first two. This process of omitting the vowel when writing compound letters can be taught as a rule of Grammar.

There needs however some sort of special instruction in the use of the sound h to form letters like Kha Gha Nha etc. which procedure would otherwise be confusing to the child. This can be done by calling the regular alphabet ha (with the vowel sound a) as ha and the Dhathu Cabda h as Adesa or Paryaya h or h of multiple use.

## Some Criticisms Answered

It is generally criticised that by adopting this Lipi one has to write two or three characters to represent an alphabet of an Indian language which would make writing by the hand much slower. This criticism will be found unsupported by facts on a closer examination of the scripts of the various Indian languages. Barring some characters in the Tamil, Malayalam and Gujrathi alphabets the rest of the characters in all the languages can only be formed by more than one distinct motion of the hand while in the case of the Bhasha Lipi a complete word can be written in one free motion of the hand without lifting the pen in majority of cases. Diacritical marks wherever needed can be added as a subsequent movement of the hand after completing the word. For this reason, in actual writing, Bhasha Lipi would be quicker than most of the Indian languages.

Another criticism is in respect of the use of capital letters and the use of two different forms of characters, one used for printing and another for writing. From a scientific standpoint this difference is a useless innovation and unless the whole world recognise this there would be no sense in our alone adopting a method different from the rest. The

disadvantages of the system have been surmounted already in the designing of typewriters and type-faces and for this reason we would not be placed in any serious disadvantage by the adoption of the generally accepted procedure. Moreover the use of capitals at the beginning of sentences is a relieving feature while reading and adds to the beauty of the printed word by giving scope to variety of design. I have desisted from making a special recommendation in this regard for the simple reason that since our movement for Romanisation of the script has to be voluntarily propagated and adopted the imposition of any out of the way method would not gain easy currency. One thing can be done in this respect and that is the adoption of capital letters would be purely a voluntary affair which can be dispensed with in writing and while teaching children the same amount of latitude can be shown to them. Currently in English proper names are begun with capital letters as a principle though this does not seem to be an absolute necessity for us in transliterating Indian names in Bhasha Lipi. Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji in an Oxford Pamphlet on languages of India has suggested the use of Asterisks before proper names and I should think this is much worse than using capitals for this would make the printed word look ugly. So

far as writing is concerned we need not worry much about these capitals, but in printing since these types are readily available we can very well use capitals and follow the current procedure. It is premature to lay down hard and fast rules in this respect and the public would themselves set the vogue in relation to such things

As regards the two sets of characters one for printing and one for writing, instead of being a disability this turns out to be a very useful feature. I don't think anybody must have been scared by this at the time of learning English and after all since we are going to eliminate from the child's curriculum the learning of three to four hundred different characters it wouldn't be much of a burden to him to learn this difference and get used to it. For printing the Bhasha Lipi offers scope for an endless variety of designs in type faces all gained for little or no effort on our part. To develop that much variety of artistic type faces in any of our present day Indian languages would take another century and in the meanwhile the progress in the designing of types for the European languages would be tenfold, with the result we would never catch up with them. Few in India really appreciate the beauty of a type face



with the result our printing is much below the standard of any other country in the world. With printing in such a stage we cannot hope to reach the people with the printed word nor can we educate them in the proper way. After all knowledge disseminated through the medium of written or printed words is more exact and thereby more valuable than that disseminated through the word of mouth.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has suggested the devising of a common script for Hindi, Bengali, Gujrathi and Mahrathi and another for the South Indian languages with the Urdu script remaining intact. In his essay on the question of languages (*All India Congress Committee and reproduced in Unity of India and Dr Z. A. Ahmad's symposium on the National Language for India*) Panditji makes the following detailed recommendations. In the Hindusthani speaking areas both Hindi and Urdu with their scripts should be officially recognised. Public notifications should be issued in both the scripts. Hindusthani (both scripts) will be recognised as the All India Language. Each pupil or his parents will make a choice of script. Pupils will not be compelled to learn both scripts but may be encouraged to do so in the secondary stage. The medium of instruction

for University education will be the language of the Linguistic area Hindustani (either script) and a foreign language should be compulsory subjects. From all these recommendations one is left to believe that in getting oneself educated one has got to be learning an endless variety of scripts. How far this would be possible is for the child himself to decide, but any way, if he happens to come out of a University he would be nothing else but an M Sc., a Master of Scripts. What more can a youth expect himself to be after undergoing an education planned on these lines?

Another major criticism levelled against the adoption of the Roman Script is that this would result in indiscriminate spelling of Indian words. Undoubtedly there is a possibility of this occurring and also of the sounds of the Indian words losing their pristine purity, particularly Sanskrit sounds. This has already occurred in most of the spoken languages as regards Sanskrit words, particularly in the North, as a matter of convenience in pronouncing. However, we can guard against this possibility by compiling standard lexicons in all the languages based on the original sounds of these words and insisting that spellings of words should exactly correspond to their original sounds.

For example the word Hethu would not be written as Hatu Hathu or Hetu or the name word Lakshmi as Lokhi Lakki or Luxmi. Some sort of such restriction is absolutely necessary even if children are to be taught the Bhasha Lipi in the way recommended by the writer adopting the Indian phonetical way of rendering the alphabets. More than children adults and litterateurs are guilty of this indiscriminate spelling of Indian words at present. However this should not mean that the accepted usage of Sanskrit words like Gram and Varsh in Hindi as Gam or Baras should be discontinued.

To popularise the correct method of rendering Indian Languages in Bhasha Lipi and as a guide for others to follow it is proposed to edit a Journal in simple Hindusthani on behalf of the Bhasha Samithi printed in Bhasha Lipi in addition to the printing of text books Primers and self taught series of language books. It would also help the cause greatly if talented writers take upon themselves the initiative and task of publishing their works in the new script. They need not be afraid of a loss of market for such books as the movement is bound to grow inspite of all opposition since the people themselves are going to gain out of the innovation. However every new and

progressive movement must meet with a wall of stern opposition from the old guards and established institutions and societies, but this should not in any way discourage the pioneers. I have only hope in the younger generation, not in the entire body of them, but in a major portion, since some of these younger people themselves have been swayed by the old set of ideals or have become dogmatic hirelings of foreign political institutions:

Assessing all factors the Bhasha Lipi has more advantages than disadvantages. To the Printer this must mean saving of four hundred to five hundred types for each of the various Indian languages, to the layman saving of effort in learning, reading and writing and to the country and the people in general the easiest access to world civilization and unity in the home-front.

I am reminded in this connection of a friend's suggestion to have all of Rabindranath's works transliterated in Devanagari to make the wealth of this genius available to a larger public than the people of Bengal. How much more wide the field would be if these great gems are transliterated in Bhasha Lipi! How many to-day know of Vallathol, that great genius, no way less than Rabindranath, whose poetry

in Malayalam is a characteristic blend of the poetry of Kalidasa and that of the modern bard ?

To bring home the fact of how far the difference in scripts of Indian languages contributes to wastage of effort the effort involved in the making of the chart which forms an appendix to this volume is a fitting example. How many of our Printers have the resources equipment and personnel to set together more than half a dozen scripts of India and print in these ? And according to the Linguistic Survey of India there are 179 languages and 544 dialects in India ! The chart was originally prepared to include the scripts of various other Indian languages and that of Singhalese but these had to be eschewed on account of the difficulty in getting these types from other parts of the country. For the same reasons much of the book had to be rewritten and detailed appendixes including illustrative examples showing such scripts and their combinations had to be omitted entirely. These would be included in the respective primers for the languages concerned and printed separately. However this does not affect the main purpose of the Book nor its usefulness for all the Indian languages have the same alphabet more or less. Only scripts differ. Singhalese follows the

alphabet as Malayalam with the exception of Zha, R'a, & 'T'ta In the formation of the characters of the script Singhalese resembles Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam, from the latter various characters being bodily lifted including the Dirkha attached to consonants and similar vowel additions eg, to represent the au, e, i etc Altogether 612 syllabic characters are formed by such combinations in addition to various other compound letters and sounds as in any other Indian language

### **Pronunciation of Letters in the Alphabets.**

The sound represented by the Bhasha Lipi character Zha in the chart is peculiar to Tamil and Malayalam, though according to English phonetic representation it is impossible to correctly represent the sound Those who speak these languages will however be able to appreciate the nearness of this sound, the actual pronunciation being different However in the matter of pronunciation children at the time of schooling have to be instructed in the correct sound values In Bengal, I have noticed, this discrimination in the matter of sounds in actual pronunciation is not closely followed, though children are taught Sa, Sha and Ca as dental sa, cerebral sa, and palatal sa but all these are pronounced as sa.

with a slight leaning to the sound sho The same remarks apply to the Na sounds The alphabets representing the sounds R L or ri or li with their dirkhas are superfluous in most of the languages except for transliterating Sanskrit words and for this reason are often forgotten by literates even To Tamil the entire Sanskrit alphabet though not necessary will be found useful in view of the tendency in that language just as in any other to render Sanskrit sounds in the same pure form I feel this tendency is to be encouraged rather than deprecated as done by some scholars Sanskrit is a common heritage for the entire country and nobody's pride need be hurt by borrowing from this The sentiment restraining such borrowing is the consequence to the spreading of a pernicious racial theory in the country of comparatively recent origin about which I will have to refer subsequently

From the Chart appended it would be evident to any casual observer that all the Indian languages without a single exception follow the same basic alphabet and on a deeper study it would also be found that this basic unity extends to the formation of words and sentences the use of verbs cases and tense From the number of alphabets Tamil the oldest spoken language has the smallest

number, 32 characters and Malavalam, the most recent, the largest, 56 characters

### A National Language for India

Ever since the masses became politically conscious the question of a national language for the whole of India has come to the forefront. The Indian National Congress the only political organisation in the country representing the broad masses of people was the first to pay any serious attention to this question. Rival political organisations to extend their platform for agitation entered into a controversy over this subject of a common language with results not at all beneficial to the country or the question as a whole.

As pointed out earlier this controversy from the realm of politics has stepped into the realms of religion and race and for this reason these various factors in so far as they affect the language controversy need be considered.

The consensus of opinion in Congress circles favour the adoption of that language which is generally called by the names Hindi, Hindustani or Urdu spoken as mother tongue by more than 12 crores of people mostly in the Gangetic regions. The core of this language is basically Indian supplied by the



Prakrits spoken in these regions and modified to a very considerable extent by the influx of foreign words mostly Persian. The language in its simpler form is easily understood by a further<sup>1</sup> number of 12 crores of people in the adjoining regions by reason of the racial admixture of these people with the Persian settlers of the early times and the invaders in recent history. In its elements the language is forty percent of Persian inspiration and the rest 60 per cent Indian but in its developed form as Urdu its Persian content is considerably larger. The language is simple in its elementary form being originated by the admixture and contact of the two peoples foreigners and Indian. It has no special beauty or fluency of its own and is ill equipped for literary purposes unless reinforced by the purer Indian languages like Sanskrit or by foreign languages like Persian. To say it is endowed with very great charm or beauty of expression as compared to other Indian languages is mere fiction perpetrated as a matter of self conceit by those who speak or patronise the language. In its literary form which shows a greater orientation towards Sanskrit than Persian the language is currently known as Hindi and to distinguish the language in its elementary form from the two developed forms of Hindi and Urdu it is termed as Hindusthani. It is believed that

this latter form Hindusthani would take the place of the National Language, but this can only be a belief, for, without cultivating this simple language it would be difficult to make it serve the purpose of a National Language suited to present day needs with a literature of its own. And if the language is developed on present lines it can only become Urdu or Hindi.

### **Its Adoption by other Provincials**

Hindi, Urdu or Hindusthani can never become a National Language unless it is adopted willingly by other provincials who do not use the language or any of its allied speeches. In North India, Hindi, Urdu or Hindusthani in its elements can be understood by large sections of the people though it may not be their spoken language for the reason Bengali, Gujerathi, Mahratti, Assamese, Sindhi and Panjabi all have varying elements of Persian in their languages. But in South India, in none of the languages spoken in these areas the Persian element can be detected and the only method to approach or think of unity with these languages is through the Indian element in the North Indian languages. This Indian element is discernible through the orientation to Sanskrit and the early Prakrits of these languages and from the general structure of these languages.

The greatest barrier in the way of South Indians adopting Hindi or any of its variations whole heartedly as their national language is the racial theory which classifies Hindi and the other North Indian Languages as Aryan and the South Indian Languages as Dravidian a distinction which has become unhappily a source of much resentment. When this Aryan Dravidian theory was first propounded and set on foot by European scholars and later by their half caste brethren in India great resentment spread through the whole of the South against this pernicious theory which isolated the South Indians from the North Indians. According to this theory Sanskrit is regarded as of Aryan origin in the evolution of which the Dravidians had no part and for this reason various waves of agitation sprang up through the entire south for expunging Sanskrit words from all the South Indian Languages and for purifying their languages from this Aryan elements which the South Indians genuinely regarded as foreign or half caste. Bonfires of Sanskrit Puranas and scriptures were staged and ever since the gulf between the South and the North has become unbridgeable.

Swami Vivekananda and other true blooded patriots protested and contradicted against this

pernicious theory but for little or no avail, for the North Indians generally had reason to be elated over this discovery whether false or correct, for it gave them credit for everything that is great in Indian culture. Competition in the intellectual and vocational sphere from the South Indians led many professors and less talented individuals in the north to parade with this theory to help belittle the South Indians before the broad masses. Unfortunately with the latest archeological discoveries this theory will very soon recoil on the North Indians to their very great discomfiture.

However in recent times this theory has lost much of its significance under the impact of nationalism, but still one can notice the ravaging effects if one is endowed with some capacity for observation of men and their minds. It is only few years now that Mr K Natarajan wrote in the *Indian Social Reformer* at Bombay about the treatment meted out to Madrasis, a term coined to represent South Indians generally and ofcourse associated with certain amount of contempt by the North Indians, in that city which the *Modern Review* of Calcutta reproduced in one of its issues by way of comment.

A study of recent politics in Ceylon would indicate what destructive trends politics can take under

the impact of such racial theories. Bandarinaike the leader of the Singhala Mahasabha following Mr Jinnah of India thinks today in terms of two nations in such a small island one of the Aryan descendants and the other composed of the Dravidian descendants. Moreover Ceylon has imported the services of a European Professor from India to contradict the theory of Rev Inana Prakasa who holds that Singhalese is a Dravidian language and to establish beyond doubt that Singhalese people are of Aryan descent and that Singhalese is an Aryan language. Through the courtesy of the Librarian of the Colombo Museum the writer had occasion to gain some insight into this controversy while in Colombo. Today it is not an infrequent thing for a casual visitor from India to be questioned by school boys and commoners in friendly conversations whether he is an Aryan or a Dravidian. School Text Books from the infant reader onwards gloat over the Tamilian or Dravidian Menace to the island and the fact that Singhalese are the descendants of the fair skinned Aryans from the north of India and that Dravidians are generally dark people. The Green Books also are not free from this bias and the announcement in the early part of 1943 by the Ceylon University to rename the Professorship of Singhalese as the Professor of Aryan languages

and the Professor of Tamil as the Professor of Dravidian languages prompted the writer to address the following letter to the Editor of the Ceylon Daily News

The Editor,

Ceylon Daily News,

Colombo,

Dear Sir,

I was a bit amused to read about the decision of the Senate and the Council of the University of Ceylon to rename the Professor of Pali, Sanskrit and Singhalese as Professor of Indo-Aryan Languages and that of Tamil as Professor of Dravidian Languages, as reported by your Educational Correspondent in your issue of April 2, 1943. Being an Indian I would like to correct the Senate and the Council of the University and the vast body of Ceylonese people that both Pali and Sanskrit are not Indo-Aryan Languages, but are purely Indian languages, and these two languages owe no connection or cultural inspiration to Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Mesopotamia or Asia Minor, the original abode of the so-called Aryans and to the inhabitants of those tracts of land. Correctly speaking Tamil, Sanskrit and Pali, all the three are purely Indian languages and for that matter are the languages of the "Aryas".

but not Aryan or Indo Aryan languages in the conception of the Senate and the people of Ceylon who follow in the footsteps of the English historians of India's cultural heritage. Our languages and civilization are essentially Indian and we are no half castes to take pride in foreign connections. I cannot in the fitness of things say whether Singhalese is an Indo Aryan language or not because if the Singhalese people take pride in saying so I would not mind and would not also mind their saying that Singhalese originated from one of the European or Aryan languages but as a truly self respecting Indian I dislike other people driving a wedge into our body politic by saying all sorts of things on the origin of our languages and the culture of our people. I would like to impress on the people of this country that we in India are not two races inspite of the English mans and Pakistanwallas saying to the contrary but one single great race called Indians and ofcourse we had and are still absorbing a large number of other races but that does not mean that we have become half castes and low castes in parts. Aryas of our Vedas and scriptures were not the Aryans of the European Historians but were the learned folk of India and the Tamilians were themselves great Aryas and had produced some of the greatest Acharyas as well

The Aryans, *the fair skinned people* as the History Text Books in Ceylon teach (and the Green Books also) who came from Central Asia brought no civilization to India, had little or no cultural background to offer us cultural or linguistic inspiration and the two of our Languages Sanskrit and Tamil have greater antiquity than those Aryans European Historians whose vision of evolutionary History is guided by the half European Adam and Eve of their Gospel may say that India got her civilization from those people but facts point the other way round No doubt at various stages in our civilization we may have absorbed the racial characteristics of various other peoples, but our culture has always remained true to the mother country and the two Languages, Sanskrit and Tamil, have given expression to that culture That is why we Indians have a Mother Country while the rest of the nations have their Father Lands Foreigners may have left deep marks on our peoples, like the Anglo Indians etc, but Indians for the most part are still Indians and not half-Europeans or half-Persians I cannot try to elaborate on this presently but readers would find more convincing facts in one of my forthcoming publications, but before they have access to such facts I would like them to foster the spirit in Ceylon that Singhalese is a Ceylonese language and that Tamil, Sanskrit and



Pali are Indian languages and not historical perversions like Indo-Aryan and Dravidian Languages. The core of the Singhalese language was supplied by the people of this country whether they were Vedic civilized people or uncivilized people and the effect of the Indian languages on it has been to improve upon this core. We have for similar example the Hindi group of languages in India which bear characteristic traces of foreign influence but that cannot be said of Tamil Sanskrit or Pali. Let the Ceylon University true to the greatness of the country have therefore chairs for the Singhalese language the original and characteristic language of Ceylon and other distinct chairs for the Indian languages of Tamil Pali and Sanskrit to cater for the needs of those inhabitants of this country who still cling to India's cultural and linguistic heritage instead of pandering to the whims of party politicians and foreigners who find some sort of excuse to drive wedge between the Tamil speaking and Singhalese speaking people of this land.

Colombo

*April 3 1943*

*Yours truly*

**Shahid Pravin**

But since writing this letter I have been seriously disappointed to find that some of our own national

leaders are obsessed with some sort of prejudice, arrogance or something like that regarding South Indians and their culture Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, for example in his essay on the languages question referred to earlier makes the following observation "I do not know how far it is possible for the Dravidian Languages of the South to fit in with a Northern script, or to evolve a common script for themselves" It should be noted that Panditji is credited to be the most well informed among our politicians and he sits in committee frequently with eminent South Indians like Rajaji and Pattabhi who are members of the Congress Working Committee and has had contact with South India by visits to that part of the country and in various other ways If Panditji can be exact about the internal affairs of China, Finland, America or Spain why should not this Panditji be exact about one Province of his own country If he wanted to, he would have had enough and more of opportunities Jawaharlal would be pretty certain of his Persian or Aryan ancestry but he would forget his blood-brother-ship with Indians !

Doctor Sunithi Kumar Chatterji, a Linguist of considerable reputation has written a pamphlet for the Oxford University Press on Languages and the Linguistic Problem In this small pamphlet extending to 32

pages this learned Doctor has used the terms Aryan and Dravidian a few hundred times I feel for little or no purpose I do not attribute any racial prejudice to this writer until I come to know more of him and at times he has prefixed the word Dravidian with the word great Do not Ceylon Text Books also have the same way ? But some of this Professor's remarks just as any other Linguist's struck me and I reproduce one or two for the reader's sake to form his own opinion in the light of the remarks which I add subsequently

Listing the North Indian Languages Dr Chatterjee comments The above are the Languages of the Indo Aryan group of the Indo Iranian or Aryan branch of the Irdo-European speech family Shorn off the Professorial artifice this sentence can simply mean that these are the Indian Languages which bear characteristic traces of foreign influence say Persian At another step The Aryan speech family is the most important in India numerically culturally and in all other ways \* and regarding Sanskrit the Professor remarks A younger form of this old Aryan speech in India became established a Sanskrit the great religious and culture language of Hindu India by 500 B C

Before entering into this controversy Aryan-Dravidian I would like myself to be exactly told from

where this Aryan comes in The Germans have been making much use of this Aryan myth and following them this Aryans must be from somewhere in Europe, if not from Germany itself Otherwise, if they are from farther East they would be either Slavs, or crafty orientals if they are from Persia or somewhere nearabouts, and in either case the Germans wouldn't accept them as their forefathers If they are from India, well ofcourse the Indian professors need not at all call them Indo-European or Indo-Iranian or Aryan. Then it becomes something ridiculously complex calling an Indian half-caste when he isn't Let us consider also what does this word Aryan mean It has the root in the Greek word Areia meaning the East part of ancient Persia from which the word Iran is also derived Philologists say that this can be traced to the word Ar meaning plough and it can also be traced to the word in Italian for Air In current English the word Aria means an air or rhythmical song introduced in an opera and the word Arian can mean as pertaining to Arius of Alexandria (A D 336) who denied the Divinity of Christ In Sanskrit the word Arya is synonymous with the word Sreshta (Creshta in Bhasha Lipi) meaning superior, learned, elder, etc, and it is this word that has inspired these philologists, racial Pandits and the rest to coin it and parade with

it in and out of season If this word deliberately chosen to hoodwink public mind particularly in India is expunged from their terminology then their rams robe is revealed in its nakedness Since this Sanskrit word has no racial significance for in Sanskrit literature particularly dramas the wife calls the husband Arya Puthra and in the Prakritic form even in some of the present day languages say for example Malayalam the child calls father Achcha (Frja Arya) and <sup>ci</sup>in Tamil Ayya for senior and Ayyar as a caste name I would prefer to use some other word which is more exact and thereby more easily identified than this word in my analysis because my purpose is not to hoodwink the public mind nor is it to gain an University degree If he is a foreigner let us call him Persian if he can be identified as such or European if he is so and if neither of these just simply a foreigner

Following the arguments of these Linguists Sanskrit was a language evolved by these foreigners in India Then why this Sanskrit became an Indian language instead of remaining a better Persian a better Central Asian Dialect a better Greek or a better European language? There must have been something which influenced this leaning this acclimatisation to the soil and the languages of this country and this force

which brought about such a radical change could not have been inferior to this foreigner's culture. If it were to be inferior the chance would have been for Sanskrit to become Persian or some other allied form of it and not Sanskrit that characteristically Indian language which is germane to every provincial of this country and the language spoken by him. Let us call this pull which influenced the language, Indian, that original inhabitant and his culture, for I do not like to call that great forefather of mine in whom I have every reason to be proud of, by any other name. From the point of view of Archeological, Linguistic and other evidences this Indian forefathers of ours were blood brothers of the forefathers of the present day Tamilians or the Dravidians as you call them.

Now approaching the same problem from another stand point let us examine what do all these Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-Iranian or Aryan branch of the Indo-European and the like of Indo-Bunkum mean. These linguists believe in a hypothetical language from which all the other languages are offshoots, modifications or adaptations and to this language, Sanskrit and the early language of the Rigveda are nearer than any of the present day languages. This whole theory of a hypothetical language springs from the conception

in pired by the Gospel that all mankind are descen-  
dants of one man and one woman the God's first  
creattoon Adam and Eve and to these people to think  
in any other way of the whole problem of evolution is  
profanity The beauty is that these gentlemen would  
never admit that they are guided by the Gospel but  
instead have invoked all sorts of Professorial artifice to  
put this theory on its foot From a scientific stand point  
or following the Hindu Cosmogony of the Decavathara  
human beings could have possibly made their appea-  
rance not at one place alone on the face of the earth  
but at various places where life was possible and these  
men would not have possibly waited to begin articula-  
ting their ideas and emotions till coming into contact  
with the speakers of this hypothetical language  
Further such contact was impracticable and to think in  
terms of such is absurd even now How many of these  
present day professors would if left alone at the brink of  
a Jungle dare enough to explore it and reach the other  
end and then how many of these tribal people could  
you expect to establish contact from India to Central  
Europe or the Mountain of Alps for the mere sake of  
evolving this Professors Moonstone of an Indo European  
hypothetical language For centuries the vision of the  
early human beings in different parts of the world  
could only be that the earth ended with the river or

the mountain yon, and those people would not have possibly waited to speak till they mapped the earth. If that be the case, the early inhabitants of India in one part of the country didn't go to Europe to get their language, when others in different parts of the country evolved their own independently. And it is more than possible that these languages reached a uniformity before they came in contact with people in other parts of the world. As regards the Anthropologist's contention that probably no man evolved out of the ape any where in the regions from Himalayas to Kanya Kumari or in the area represented by these present day boundaries on the global surface of that time, he only relies on the excavations of skulls, bones of mammals and other archeological finds but disregards entirely the fact that the climate of India with a heavy rainfall and an erosive soil are not ideal conditions for the preservation of such relics or for that matter any relic whatsoever for considerably long periods. Conditions in Egypt in the arid deserts, and in the snowclad regions of Europe are entirely different, and before you surmise anything, these factors must be given serious consideration.

Now let us come to this Dravidian, said to be a race by himself, who built a civilization in Sind and the



Punjab in the 4th Millentum B C (in plain language 6000 years ago from now and this is only an approximate guess) The present day visible semblance of his language and culture is represented by Tamil and linguistically it has 31 alphabets or basic sounds before reducing them to alphabet (vide chart appended) leaving aside the compound letter Ksha Excluding the three letters K Zha and La twenty eight of these are in Sanskrit and on examination it would also be found that the rest of all sounds in Sanskrit are subdivisions of these basic sounds like dental palatal or cerebral Sanskrit does not also contain the foreign sounds of F Q or Z (I am only citing examples which any lay reader can follow) which are features of all foreign languages say European or Persian As regards the sound Zha it is peculiar to Tamil and Malayalam and as regards La it is contested that Sanskrit has this sound though not generally represented by a distinct alphabet eg the La in Lalita and Pralayam are pronounced in Sanskrit differently from the La of Alapana or Leela (Lala) according to some and Malayalam adopts this differentiation However it is only a matter of difference in pronunciation and in the grammars of languages which make use of these distinct sounds it is said that these two sounds are not to be so much differentiated ie

La'layo rabheda In addition the sounds N'ga, No 22' in the chart, and N'ha, No 25 are distinct sounds common to all the Indian languages which no other foreign language has either in its basic form or by combination of sounds and Tamil, even in the oldest specimen of it, abounds in these two sounds The antiquity of Sanskrit, as earlier mentioned, quoting Dr Chatterjee, is assigned to the era 500 B C, but this is very doubtful and is keenly contested, and the earliest specimen of it, that of the Rigveda, say 1,000 B C, according to the same Doctor Without propounding any learned theory I leave it to the reader to form his own conclusion whether this Tamil is nearer to Sanskrit than Persian, German or the Indo-European hypothetical complex and also whether this Tamil was the source of inspiration in the evolution of Sanskrit than any one of the above mentioned foreign languages

In addition, if one sits down to examine these two sets of languages there are more similarities than dissimilarities Take for example the use of Anuswaram or the Am sound as ending to words which is followed widely in Tamil and equally common to Sanskrit but not at all a feature of any of the North Indian Languages In how many of the North Indian Languages you have this form though they lay great claims on Sanskrit as their

cultural possession ? I would also ask these linguists whether they can point out a usage to correspond with the Izafat in Persian or the peculiar usage of the word of for denoting the possessive case in any European language in a way to correspond with the usage in any Indian Language whether the Indo-European or Aryan of the North or the purely Indian of the South for denoting the Shashti Vibhakthi For example is it possible to find a parallel to the usage Khuda yi Jehan God of the world in any Indian language or for the adjectival usage Kitab i Arabi for the Arabic Book ? In any Indian language it can only be translated as world's God eg Duniyaka Dev Lokathin Deivam and just Arabi Pusthak or Arabi Pusthakam The unity of the Indian languages are evident even on a superficial examination of these languages A sentence in any Indian language whether North Indian or South Indian can be translated word for word into any other Indian language and such translation would be perfectly idiomatic and grammatical without any transposition of the words because of the fact that all the Indian languages follow the same principle in the arrangement of the words in sentences This unity is not far to seek This has been the result of the cultural unity of the people from one end of the country to the other since time immemorial in the

evolution on which geography, rather than ethnological or other considerations, played the leading role

Dravida and Ārya the two terms occurring in Sanskrit literature are never used as ethnological terms and there is absolutely little evidence to prove that at any time India was divided on ethnological basis. Śrī Kumāra in his *Silparatna* discussing on Architectural styles classifies these into three, Nagara belonging to the area Himalayas to Vindhya, Dvārāstra from Vindhya to Krishna and Vesara from Krishna to Kanya Kumārī in the sixteenth century A.D. In this case Dravida is assigned with the Rajasa quality. R̥gveda which has been often cited by these racial Pandits as an authority offers still less convincing evidence to class the Āryans as belonging to any separate race. If this racial division was in any way implied at any time Śāṅkara-charya, Prabhakara, Madhavacharya, Kulasekhara, Sakthi Bhadra, names which prove beyond all doubt the unity of India, would not have come all the way to save a half caste civilization if that is what these people mean by their Āryan civilization. And what of Vivekananda?

It would be interesting to note in this connection that the Racial Pandit's classification of the Bengali as a Mongol Dravidian racial mixture elicited the wrath of many Bengalees, with the result that one anthropologist

A Professor Blackian himself but carried greatly by the supremacy of this Varangians and influenced by their culture would begin his paper on Linguistics before the Varangian Society (Royal Imperial or Republican we can't presume now) in 2500 A D in the following terms

Gentlemen Assaminese Taminese Banganese and Telegese are Varangian languages being of the Varian group of the Vararian branch of the Varangian speech family and are near cousins of English Hindi Malayalam Gujerathi and Kanarese belonging to the Blackian group of the Bloody Blackian Linguistic family This Varangians are the most important people their civilization extending as far back as the Rigvedic period for the reason that both the words Vara and Anga are Sanskrit terms frequently mentioned in early Sanskrit Literature meaning superior and beautiful bodied However by the fact that in this literature only the word Varangini being found used without a single reference to the word Varangian which for the first time is found mentioned in the monumental historical work 'The Bulpington of Blup by H G Wells the Prophet and great Historian of the twentieth century A. D as a super race it is to be presumed that in the Rigvedic period the Varangian women were

only taken notice of by the Rigvedic Blackians In the twentieth century the Varangians built up the great culture cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras all bearing Varangian names and generally came to subordinate all other civilizations with the result Varangian speeches, ways of dress and living were generally adopted by the people. Mahathma Gandhi, a name referred to in the history of the period twentieth century A D from the earlier photographs is found wearing the Varangian dress which for some reason or other he seems to have discarded to the Blackian way of dress subsequently, which gives room for the present day controversy whether this man was a Varangian himself or a Blackian From the traces left of his writings he could only be a Varangian, for Blackians generally never reached such intellectual heights The Varangian speech family can be distinguished from the Blackian tongues of the present day from the two following examples from Modern Benganese and Taminese for the sentence in English of "I am going where you know?" In Modern Benganese this can be translated as "Ami Whera Jache Ye 'no?" and in Modern Taminese as "Nan Enka Gonra Ye nara" While the same sentence in Blackian languages of Hindi and Kanarese are "Ham Kaham Jathe heim Thum Janthe ho?" and "Nanu Elli

Hoguthene Nimage gotho ? respectively Gentlemen by any stretch of imagination you cannot find any similarity between these two groups of languages which accounts for the irreconcilable nature of the two races Varangian and Blackian Say for example the words Ami in modern Benganese is a transposition of the word I am and the other words are all Prakrits of English the original Varangian language The words Kaham and Ellit or for that matter any other word in the Blackian speeches of Hindi and Kanarese cannot be traced to an equivalent root sound in English or any modern Varangian language

This digression into the racial question in a study on languages though unnecessary could not be avoided for the reason that the literature published by learned philologists politicians and propagandists on the Indian language question in recent times have seriously disappointed me From the way these gentlemen have handled the whole problem it is very doubtful that Hindi would be accepted by all people as a common language in the near future Though not claiming to be a philologist or linguist myself I have had occasion to live in different parts of the country and to come in contact with broad masses of people both in the cities and the villages and to know much of their

psychology in addition to the rudiments of a number of both South Indian and North Indian Languages with the result to-day I am a confirmed believer in the unity of India and I also visualise the possibility of unifying India on a still more compact basis For this, a common language is very helpful and with Hindi, in its simpler form, forming the base we can build a language to meet this need by acclimatising the Hindi to local conditions by rounding off the Persian sounds to Indian and by borrowing from the provincial languages as far as possible This would afford a characteristic flexibility in the pronunciation of the Hindi sounds and would relieve these provincials of the inferiority complex they feel when they talk Hindi to-day because of the wrong notion that Hindi pronounced with a Persian accent or with the Heims and Hums and the Ha sounds predominantly coming out is the only correct way of speaking the language This is indeed a very mistaken notion perpetrated by the film producers in the country If that standard is applied English spoken by an Indian, Australian or American can never be English, because of the differences in pronunciation, and equal to the English spoken by the pure Englishman from Oxford We can kill this wrong notion by producing pictures in simple Hindi spoken by the respective provincials in



their own way so that the people would gain confidence in the use of the language and their capacity to adopt to its use. This would at the same time vitalise the language and localise it too with the result there would be little or no room for a controversy whether we should go to Persia for our borrowings. A Bengali while speaking Hindi would borrow from Bengali when in doubt and do the same thing while writing and a Tamilian would do his borrowing from Tamil with the result this language would gain a vitality and diversity to reach the countryside in Bengal or Trichinopoly or the Punjab. Hindi being a language with an Indian base can be very easily adapted in this manner which we cannot possibly do with English or any other foreign language. A literary language with the same latitude in the matter of shaping and borrowing can be developed side by side so that in the course of next ten years we should be in a position to have a common language reaching the masses in the countryside and the Provincial towns. With a common script like the Bhasha Lipi which would only take eight hours of instruction to master the future is really bright.

### Acknowledgement

The suggestion to adopt the Roman Alphabet as a common script has been made by various people

beginning with the Missionaries who came out to the country in the wake of the conquest of the country by Europeans and then, subsequently, in the height of the nationalist movement by Subhash Chandra Bose, Professor Humayun Kabir, Doctor Suniti Kumar Chatterji and once upon a time by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and a host of other politicians to all of whom the writer is indebted. In the rendering of the Alphabets of the various Indian languages into Bhasha Lipi the writer has been guided by the arrangements on the present day standard typewriters and Printers' equipment rather than the rules of the International Phonetic Association. To put the dash above letters however some difficulty would be experienced on present day typewriters without designing a suitable key combining backspacing and typing of the character in one operation, but efforts would be made in the design of postwar typewriters to include this feature for Indian requirements.

### Conclusion

Some people would be inclined to criticise the absence of diacritical marks to distinguish the Bengali characters of 'Da and 'Da Nos 61 and 62 in the chart from the variations of the same characters under numbers 30 and 31 and the Tamil Na number 58 from the

number 37 but these omissions are intentional. These distinctions in pronunciation in the case of the two Bengali sounds are not very distinguishable and in the opinion of the writer this superfluous distinction can be eliminated to simplify the alphabet but however the decision in this regard would lie with the Council of the Bangala Bhasha Samithi. So also in the case of the Tamil Na since no other language makes this distinction in the sounds of the Na say for example in Hindi the Na in Mana meaning mind and the Na in Narayana are differently pronounced but both are written in the same way it is omitted. Until such time the regular Primers are made available the chart is intended to serve the purpose of guidance. The Book was planned to be more comprehensive and in its price cheaper but the War has stood in the way of giving effect to either.

### Appendix

Bhasha Samithi Chart showing the Alphabets of Indian Languages with Bhasha Lipi and Dhathu Cabda forms the Appendix to this Volume